



policy framework

The Planning Process

The Village of Barrington Hills adopted its Official Plan by Ordinance on September 23, 1957 with subsequent revision in Title 6 of the Village Code. On May 23, 1976, the Village adopted the “BACOG Area Land-Use Policies Map” and the “BACOG Area Environmental Analyses and Policies Map” except to the extent that the maps differ from the most current edition of the Barrington Hills Official Map or the Barrington Hills Road Network Map. Whenever the BACOG maps and the Barrington Hills Official Maps differ, the Barrington Hills Official Map or Barrington Hills Road Network Map remains in full force and is controlling.

Concurrently, Village representatives contributed input to county-wide planning processes in Lake, Cook, Kane, and McHenry Counties, and to the regional planning process of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission.

The Comprehensive Plan from 1995 was prepared in the participatory tradition, involving a special Comprehensive Plan Committee of the Village Plan Commission and Board of Trustees, assistance and review from the staff of BACOG and other units of government (including the U. S. Soil Conservation Service), numerous public meetings, and extensive coverage by local newspapers.

At the direction of the Village Board of Trustees, beginning in July of 2004, the Plan Commission began a review and update of the Comprehensive Plan. It is intended that this updated plan will endure for the foreseeable future, subject to minor amendments, in response to community objectives and area changes.

Vision

This comprehensive plan continues the long established practice of building on the past, recognizing that present property owners must work to assure that they leave a stronger community and a healthy environment to their heirs. The vision that guides the preparation of this plan recognizes that:

Barrington Hills is a community of residents acting as stewards for a quiet, secure and natural environment, unique within the Chicago metropolitan area, which supports the long term, sustainable use of property for equestrian-oriented, open countryside living.

One characteristic which distinguishes Barrington Hills from other BACOG communities is its equestrian tradition and the interrelationship with the natural environment in which the keeping of horses and the maintenance of the equestrian community requires the large-lots and interwoven trail system which, in turn, supports the long term sustainability of the sensitive natural environment. Without the gentle use, the natural environment could not be maintained; without the natural environment, the use cannot be maintained. The balance between the 5 acres density residential use and the limited groundwater resources is not simply a quality of life issue, but a conscious decision focusing on the protection of water quality and water quantity. Though many current property owners do not keep horses, they are attracted to the community, in part, due to this symbiotic natural/equestrian environment.



Policy Framework:

In order to advance the Vision, the Village of Barrington Hills establishes its goals, sets objectives and pursues a strategy under a unified policy framework. Its objectives are focused on issues related to four overall goals: Ecology, Community Character, Community Services, and Finance.

Ecology

Retain a balanced and healthful relationship between people and nature's life support systems. Act as the current stewards of the environment which future generations will want to inherit.

Objectives are:

1. Recognize and respect the limitations to development inherent in the reliance on the limited groundwater resources which underlie the land in Barrington Hills.
2. Conserve groundwater supplies and protect underground aquifers from contamination, overuse, and misuse.
3. Respect the natural topography, soils, and geology.
4. Encourage groundwater recharge and protect recharge areas.
5. Protect lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands from pollution and degradation.
6. Maintain adequate stormwater drainage capacities of drainage basins, floodplains, and waterways.
7. Conserve and enhance native trees and plants, especially those in woodlands, prairies and wetlands, as well as other compatible vegetative cover.
8. Nurture endangered wildlife and aquatic species, and enhance their habitats.
9. Respect the balance of indigenous wildlife population with appropriate management techniques.
10. Mitigate the adverse impact of air pollutants, pesticides and fertilizers, odors, sounds, and artificial lights.
11. Encourage the conservation of energy in site planning and building design, and support alternative and renewable energy sources and conservation measures.
12. Evaluate the impact of new development on the environment and the sustainability of the community.
13. Encourage reduction in the reliance on chemical and synthetic compounds in building materials, operations, products, and services.
14. Encourage local food production to support local agriculture and limit the need for long-distance transport of food.
15. Encourage alternatives to impervious paving materials and reduce use of impervious materials.



Community Character

Restore, retain, and promote the unique qualities of a countryside community.

Objectives are to:

1. Assure that the predominant scale, arrangement, and appearance of development will be compatible to and consistent with a semi-rural countryside of existing residential estates and the equestrian trail system.
2. Encourage further development of and natural conditions which are necessary to the Village's equestrian trail system.
3. Support the continuation of appropriate agricultural, equestrian, and ancillary land uses.
4. Encourage a natural character for lakes, shorelines, and waterways.
5. Respect and protect the heritage of historical, architectural, and archeological landmarks.
6. Encourage "human-scaled", community-building development that is consistent with the desired countryside environment of the community.
7. Give special attention to the level of safety, function, and design of all roads, highways, bridges, and utility rights-of-way so as to be consistent with the desired countryside environment.
8. Locate, install, design, and construct utilities so as not to disrupt land uses, create hazards, or adversely impact the semi-rural countryside.
9. Route through-traffic (especially heavy trucks) on existing major regional arterials.
10. Protect the semi-rural countryside character from disruption which would result from the creation of a fixed-rail commuter line.
11. Protect the semi-rural countryside character from disruption which would result from the creation of a bypass through the Village.
12. Encourage the maintenance of the countryside environment by the private contribution of lands, developmental rights, or conservation easements to appropriate public or quasi-public organizations, such as Citizens for Conservation and the Barrington Hills Conservation Trust.
13. Consider reasonable and creative means of protecting existing village character.
14. Assure the sustainability of natural resources by linking development density to the carrying capacity of the land and the context of surrounding property.
15. Encourage design and land use that limits overdependence on gas-powered vehicles, reduces traffic congestion and promotes sustainable transportation patterns.
16. Encourage development patterns that enhance the open space and equestrian-based character of the community and avoid encroachment on natural resources.



Community Services

Provide essential services for the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents.

Objectives are:

1. Pursue annexation and discourage disconnection of properties consistent with the Village's ability to serve such properties adequately and with the desired character of the community.
2. Protect the extensive system of public and private equestrian trails from the intrusion of other conflicting use, and encourage the long term maintenance and preservation of the system which benefits property owners and riders throughout the community.
3. Coordinate planning and decision-making with the Barrington Countryside Park District, Unit School Districts 220 and 300, Barrington Area Council of Governments, adjacent villages, the Counties of Cook, Lake, McHenry and Kane, and the Regional Planning Agency.
4. Limit the number and extent of support services to be provided by the Village to those which are essential to a countryside community; in turn, promote private initiative and personal responsibility for the other services. Clearly identify the community services provide by the village, recognizing that those essential services change over time, responsive to real community needs.
5. Work with the service clubs and other organizations that, in lieu of an aggressive government administered service system, provide for the needs and desires of village residents including equestrian clubs, the Barrington Hills Conservation Trust, and other existing organizations.
6. Encourage individual on-site water supply and wastewater systems consistent with sound health standards, as may be promulgated by the representative County's Board of Health.
7. Encourage practices and forms of development that reduce water use.
8. Encourage safe and attractive maintenance of roads, utility rights-of-way, and other public properties.
9. Provide for law enforcement of high quality including support services offered through the Village's Emergency Telephone Number System (911).
10. Encourage effective fire protection through Fire Protection Districts servicing the community.
11. Provide responsive and efficient administrative services.
12. Enter into intergovernmental agreements with adjacent municipalities to enhance the provision of services.
13. Encourage recycling of household waste products including reuse of landscape and construction debris.



community service objectives continued...

14. Create an open planning process to provide equal protection and access to opportunities regardless of income, race, gender, or ethnicity.
15. Encourage research and data collection to provide best economic, social, and environmental indicators on community health and sustainability.

Finances

Maintain sound and equitable Village finances.

Objectives are to:

1. Coordinate growth of the Village with the level of public services that can be provided at reasonable cost.
2. Maintain sound standards and procedures of fiscal management.
3. Commit to the use of best practices on the management of Village affairs.
4. Maintain cost-effective, competitive hiring and retention practices, including compensation and benefit offerings, to assure residents of a quality Village staff and police department.
5. Avoid deficit spending.
6. Consider means to share costs for essential services with other communities and units of government.
7. Consider incentives and other economic tools to promote sustainable development that does not overburden Village resources.
8. Develop a future-oriented vision, which looks beyond current needs.
9. Encourage public awareness of issues related to sustainability and stewardship of land.
10. Consider opportunities to partner with non-government organizations and other advocacy groups.



Overall Strategy

The overall strategy for achieving these goals and objectives is to preserve critical natural resources, groundwater in particular; to support the keeping of horses and the use and expansion of the interwoven equestrian trail system; to work in cooperation with the other BACOG communities to assure the long term stability and environmental quality of the entire area; and to accept only new residential development which sustains the sensitive natural environment consistent with the Village's own population forecast which has been adopted by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (i.e., 5,060 or fewer residents in the year 2030, which represents an average increase of approximately 1 percent per year).

In addition to the historic and desired character associated with an equestrian community, the fundamental limits to development remain the reliance on very limited and environmentally vulnerable groundwater supply. An additional and significant limiting influence is the impact that development and vehicular traffic associated with development would have on the considerable amount of flora and fauna sustained by the village's open space (forest preserves, nature centers, and significant open areas on private large lot residential properties). The interest in protecting the village from the destructive intrusion of roadways, traffic congestion and other secondary development impacts are shared by the wildlife and the residents.

The Village recognizes the special nature of some properties on the periphery of the community, where the context and supporting features of nearby communities may have more influence on the utility, character and use of the property. The Village will encourage the use of these special properties in a way that ensures the preservation of the predominant character of the balance of the village as a very low density, ecologically sensitive environment supporting "equestrian-friendly" residential living.

A large part of the effectiveness of this plan will depend on the private initiative of Village residents and upon coordination with other communities in the Barrington area. New residents may become aware of this obligation of personal stewardship in the pamphlets and reference material available through the Village on a variety of subjects. In this way, implementation of the Plan will internalize many costs which would otherwise be borne by the Village.